Making case studies and reporting more meaningful

Turning everyday work into stories funders truly value





Aim of the session:

To make reporting feel less like paperwork and more like telling the story of the impact you see every day

Why This Matters

Reporting and case studies are:

- One of the strongest ways we show the difference SELFA makes
- A chance to bring children's voices and journeys to life
- Evidence funders rely on to keep supporting your work
- A way for us to celebrate what you do every day

Not just a "tick-box exercise"

…but a chance to shine a light on real change

What we'lll cover today

- How to turn everyday conversations into rich evidence
- Spotting and capturing outcomes as they naturally happen
- Simple structures that make case studies flow
- Time-saving shortcuts and templates
- Real SELFA examples
- Space to share ideas and ask questions

What most funders actually want…

- A clear need - what challenge or situation the child/family faced
- A change - what's different now
- Strong evidence - a quote, behaviour shift, parent's and professional's comments
- The role SELFA played - what we did that helped
- A human story, not a perfect one

They don’t expect

- Novel-length case studies (300 words is good)
- Highly polished writing
- Complicated professional language or acronyms

They want authentic, human stories

Everyday evidence you already have

- Referral forms
- Files, notes and observations on Salesforce
- Parents comments
- Things the child says, writes, draws
- Attendance data
- What their peers say about them
- Emails from school and professionals

The 5-Minute Case Study Formula

1. **Before -** What life looked like before SELFA
2. **Challenge -** What the child was struggling with
3. **Support -** What SELFA did
4. **Change** - What happened as a result
5. **Voice** - A quote from child or parent
6. **Now & Next** - Where they're at & what's next

This keeps case studies consistent, clear, and quick.

Top Tips

- Keep it simple
- Use AI to get you started
- Keep it human
- Use your voice
- Capture things in the moment
- Focus on change
- Don’t aim for perfect — aim for true

Practical Activity

- Choose a young person you've supported recently.
- In pairs or small groups:
- Write 2–3 bullet points for each stage of the case study formula
- Share one quote or moment you remember
- Create a short 3–4 sentence mini case study

We'll share a few examples

SELFA – Case Study Template

Please keep this anonymised.
Do not include names or identifying details.

1. Basic Information
• Age range of child/young person (e.g. 6–8, 12–14): • How long have they attended the Rebound Therapy Club?:
2. Starting Point *(Briefly describe the child before attending – bullet points are fine)*
• Level of support needed: • Any barriers to engagement (e.g. confidence, regulation, group work)
3. Support Provided *(What did SELFA/Rebound Therapy offer that supported them?)*
• Type of support given (e.g. rebound therapy, staff support, routine): • Anything adapted to meet their needs:
4. What Has Changed? *(This is the most important section)*
• What improvements have you noticed? (e.g. confidence, engagement, independence): • Any specific examples of progress:
5. Impact on the Child / Family *(Short and practical)*
• How has this affected the child's wellbeing or confidence?: • Has there been any impact on parents/carers? (e.g. break from care reassurance):
6. One Key Outcome ***(If you had to sum it up in one sentence, what difference has the project made?)***
7. Quotes
• Parent/carer quote (short – 1–2 sentences): • Staff quote:
8. Photos
• Are there any photos you feel are suitable to share for the report? • Please confirm consent is already in place for any images shared.

Josie's story

Josie, 14, was referred to Pathfinders by her mum after her school attendance collapsed. Once a keen learner, she had stopped going to school following bullying that left her anxious and withdrawn. At home, her mum described life as "walking on eggshells," with Josie often shutting herself away or becoming verbally aggressive. Struggling to juggle work, her own wellbeing, and parenting alone after a separation, mum admitted, "I'm feeling defeated and deflated."

At first, Josie found the group overwhelming and needed constant reassurance. With patience, she moved from 1-1 sessions to staying for half days, then full days, attending 6 of the 10 sessions. Working towards personal goals helped her to engage, and gradually she gained the confidence to contribute — even speaking in front of the group on occasions, a huge step forward after months of isolation. She also came to realise she was not alone, and that others shared similar challenges, which gave her a sense of belonging.

Her mum also benefitted from weekly parent groups, where she explored self-care and boundaries. This support helped rebuild family communication and gave her confidence to seek an EHCP assessment for Josie.

Today, Josie is accessing tailored education and counselling. Mum proudly shares, "Her overall mood seems better, and she has the confidence to face new things. I'm really thankful for Pathfinders."



Funder Report Template

Funder	
Date received	
Report due date	
Project description *(from funding application)*	
Overview of what the group have done *(500 words)*	
Thematic case study (linked to social objectives) *(500 words)*	
Photos *(please ensure all CYP have photo consent)*	
Quotes	

Thematic Case Studies: Telling the Bigger Story

What they are:

- Stories grouped around a shared theme, challenge or outcome -rather than a single young person.

What to include:

- A clear theme around our social objectives (e.g. Raising Aspirations from a Uni Trip, Independence – Rail Travel)
- 2–3 short examples that illustrate it
- Evidence: quotes, observations, small wins
- What SELFA did that contributed to the change
- A takeaway message for funders: “What this tells us”

Why they're powerful:

- Show patterns, not just isolated examples
- Highlight consistent impact across groups or programmes
- Help funders understand scale and context
- Great for reporting on issues like confidence, social skills, resilience, mental health, transitions, SEN needs

Questions

- What gets in the way of reporting?
- What would make it easier?
- What templates or tools would help?